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WHO DO YOU TRUST ?
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THE ORDER
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In the aftermath of the civil war that pitted hero against hero, Iron Man, a.k.a. Tony Stark, envisioned a new world order--one of responsibility and supervision, where super heroes are federally registered and held accountable to the people they protect. As the new director of the peacekeeping agency S.H.I.E.L.D., Stark personally took charge, creating the 50-State Initiative: A program placing highly trained super hero teams in each state of the nation. The Order is the first such team. Based in California, it is the crown jewel of the Initiative.

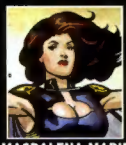
Outstanding Americans carefully recruited from a corps of volunteers, the members of the Order have one thing in common: They were all heroes in the "real" world, in ways both great and small. Rigorously trained in their astonishing new powers, the team is backed by the finest public relations and marketing that money can buy.

WELCOME TO THE ORDER

TONY STARK
IRON MAN

PEPPER POTTS
HERA

HENRY HELLRUNG
ANTHEM



MAGDALENA MARIE
VEDA

DENNIS MURRAY
HEAVY

MULHOLLAND BLACK
MULHOLLAND

JAMES WA
CALAMITY

BECKY RYAN
ARALUNE

MILO FIELDS
SUPERNAUT

After saving the San Gabriel mountains from the volatile Infernal Man, most of the team's starting lineup was replaced for drinking and partying in violation of their contract's morality and ethics clauses. One of their number, Avona, was found dead on the Los Angeles Metro. The Order's investigation uncovered foul play, and the trail led to the Black Dahlias, a vigilante girl gang, now super-powered, that Mulholland once belonged to. Disgraced for concealing her ties to the gang, Mulholland stormed out on the Order, only to be captured by the Dahlias and injected with super-power inhibiting nanobots. Unbeknownst to the Order, the Dahlias are working for the M.A.N. from S.H.A.D.O.W., a sinister government operative looking to shut the team down permanently.

Miles away, in the desert around Barstow, the team's shapeshifter, Aralune, and the one-man heavy-artillery unit Supernaut also fell prey to a trap sprung by S.H.A.D.O.W. An electromagnetic discharge rendered Aralune unable to move or control her form, and fried Supernaut's suit. But the man inside, the paraplegic veteran Milo Fields, climbed out and dragged Aralune to the relative safety of a cave to await rescue courtesy of his teammates…rescue that shows no signs of coming in time…

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YOU CAN SCOOT FORWARD IF YOU LIKE.
YEAH, I KNOW.
...
HOLLY? I WASN'T EXACTLY ASKING.
SCOOT. FORWARD.
PSSHT. FIIIINE.
SO, YOUR PARENTS--
OH, GOD-- ISN'T THIS, LIKE, A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD?
THEY WERE DUMB GRUNGE JUNKIES THE MEDIA LOVED AND ENABLED TO SELL CRAPPY TABLOIDS.
IT'S A MIRACLE I WASN'T BORN WITH ONE GIANT EYE IN THE MIDDLE OF MY FACE. OR NEEDLES IN MY--
WAS YOUR MOTHER USING DURING--
LOOK AT HER, DUDE.
OF COURSE SHE WAS USING.
BECAUSE, WELL--THERE ARE BATTERIES OF TESTS WE SHOULD RUN, CHECKING AGAINST DEVELOPMENTAL--
I'M NOT RETARDED. I'M FINE.
"FINE?"
I DON'T THINK IT'S POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE TO HAVE BEEN ORPHANED LIKE YOU WERE AND JUST BE "FINE."

AND THUS I BECAME A WARD OF THE STATE.
FAMOUSLY.
YOU BOUNCED AROUND THE SYSTEM AN AWFUL LOT.
YEAH? SO?
SO WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?
I WAS GOING THROUGH SOME CHANGES.
TELL ME ABOUT THAT.
YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT.
NOT FIRSTHAND, I DON'T.
I WANT TO HEAR, IN YOUR WORDS, WHAT IT WAS LIKE.
I WAS A FAMOUS ORPHAN AND THEN, IN THE MIDDLE OF A JUVENILE WARD, MY MUTANT ABILITIES MANIFESTED.
IT @#%$&* SUCKED, MAN.
ANYWAY, AS SOON AS I COULD GET OUT OF THE SYSTEM, I WAS OUT.
YOU LIVED ON THE STREETS.
YEAH.
I LOVED IT. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I COULD...I COULD JUST BE.
MY POWERS--SEE, EVENTS HAVE POWER, YOU KNOW? PEOPLE, PLACES, HISTORY, MEMORIES...
ENERGIES LYING DORMANT, JUST BELOW THE SURFACE...
MY POWERS LET ME TAP INTO THAT AND CONVERT IT INTO ACTUAL, Y'KNOW...
...ENERGY. DANGER-DANGER-HIGH-VOLTAGE ENERGY.
SO IF KNOWING MY L.A. HISTORY WAS THE KEY TO THAT, I STARTED TO STUDY.
LOS ANGELES
CLASH
L.A. FACTS 101
HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES

AFTER M-DAY I'VE BEEN SO LONELY. I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN CUT OFF FROM MY DREAMS, YOU KNOW?
IMAGINE A SECRET WORLD ONLY YOU KNEW ABOUT, AND IT'S ONLY IN THAT WORLD THAT YOU MADE ANY SENSE; THAT YOU DIDN'T FEEL LIKE KILLING YOURSELF ALL DAY, EVERY DAY.
AND THEN ONE DAY THAT WORLD WON'T LET YOU VISIT ANYMORE.
SO NOW YOU'RE SAYING YOU'VE GOT A PROCESS THAT CAN RESTORE MY POWERS AND GET ME BACK?
I CAN'T PROMISE YOU IT'LL WORK.
BUT I'D LIKE VERY MUCH TO TRY.

THE ORDER 8: HOLLY -OR- SEARCH AND DESTROY

WRITTEN BY **MATT FRACTION** BREAKDOWNS BY **BARRY KITSON**
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WELL, SHE @#^$%ED IT UP JUST LIKE SHE #$#@@ EVERYTHING ELSE IN HER LIFE UP.
GAWD, I THOUGHT WE RAISED HER BETTER THAN THIS.
"Children are educated by what the grown-up is, and not by his talk." --Carl Jung
NOW, NOW. LANGUAGE.
I'D HATE TO SET A BAD EXAMPLE FOR OUR GIRL WITH FOUL TALK AND UNTOWARD THOUGHT.
"If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men." --Maria Montessori
I'LL KILL YOU--!!
"Fairy tales do not tell children the dragons exist...Fairy tales tell children the dragons can be killed." --G.K. Chesterton

I'M SURE YOU'D LIKE TO TRY, LITTLE GIRL.
AND TRY YOU MIGHT.
BUT YOU WON'T KILL US ALL.
GOOD BOYS. GOOD BOYS.
SHOW ME WHERE THE PEOPLE WHO HATE AMERICA ARE HIDING.
SHOW ME THE TRAITORS.

BECKY, I --SHEFF--
I THINK I SEE THEM. I THINK THEY'RE COMING BACK.
BWUH.
BWUH.
OKAY. SO IT'S BEEN ABOUT TWO DAYS SINCE WE DRANK ANYTHING AND I'M PRETTY SURE THAT THE BAD GUYS HAVE SNIFFED US OUT.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE ANTHEM AND THE ORDER ARE. BUT THEY'RE PRETTY CLEARLY NOT COMING.
I WANT TO TRY SOMETHING, OKAY?
I WANT YOU TO RELAX AND LIE BACK. LET YOURSELF SPREAD OUT SOME. JUST LET GO FOR ME.
BWUH.
I'M GOING TO *LIE DOWN* IN YOU, OKAY?
I WANT YOU TO TRY AND FIND THE INPUT PORTS IN MY NECK AND SPINE, BECKY.
I HAVE A PLAN.

JUST RELAX AND LET ME TRY TO PILOT YOUR FRRGG--
SFUURRGGGGKKE--
--SKKKKE--
SJJJKKE--!
WHAT IS IT, BOYS?
WHAT DO YOU HEAR?
SOFTLY!
S.H.A.D.O.W. MAN.!
MY WORD.

DIE.
KOOOM
RRRR
C'MON, YOU UGLY JERKS.
THAT VOICE. THAT AWFUL VOICE.
BOY/GIRL. UNCLEAN.
SPARKY!
FFWAMM

YYYOU.
"GENERAL SOFTLY."
COME ON GET SOME.
DAMN, THAT VOICE.
IT'LL TAKE THE REST OF MY LIFE TO GET IT OUT OF MY HEAD.
OR THE REST OF YOURS.
WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.
KKRRRZZAK
I'M AFRAID THE ORDER'S COME DOWN TO TERMINATE WITH PREJUDICE.
FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE GOOD OF MANKIND AND GOD AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.
YOU'RE A REGULAR JOHNNY WALKER TALIBAN, AIN'T YA?

OF COURSE.
SHUT UP.
NOT REAL. YOU'RE AN ANDROID.
BIG TALK COMING FROM A HERMAPHRODITE MEAT-ROBOT.
YOU'RE AN ANDROID THAT CAN'T FIRE CONTINUOUSLY.
SLOW. WEAK.
SHOW YOU SLOW.
FFRRRRRKKK
DAMMIT, Y'ALL--
GRAAHH--
DAMMIT--
UNAMERICAN! UNAMERICAN!
ON THE CONTRARY, GENERAL SOFTLY.
WE'RE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
SO WHAT?
YOU THINK I SHOULD [redacted] AFRAID?

--GARRRRKKK--
KKRRAKOOOM
YOU COME AFTER MY TEAM? YOU COME AFTER--YOU KILL-- MY PEOPLE? I DON'T CARE WHO YOU WORK FOR.
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.
11100 10ERROR. YOU CA. CA11011.
11010N'T ARRESS10010T MOO11OE.
0100'M A FOUR STA11010 GENL1110
IN TH1OCOOE ARMY ORSO1 OOIOM ETHIN'.
WELL.
WE'LL JUST LET THE LAWYERS FIGURE THAT ONE OUT.
KOOOOM

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "THE M.A.N. FROM S.H.A.D.O.W."
IT DOESN'T EXIST. IT'S NOT REAL.
THEN WHO THE HELL HAS BEEN TEARING MY TEAM APART?
OKAY, TEAM, BUT, YEAH, OKAY, FIRST THINGS FIRST: WHATEVER THIS GUY SAID WAS A LIE.
I WAS ABLE TO DIG UP INFORMATION ON A PROGRAM CALLED "S.H.D.O."
S.H.D.O. WAS OVERSEEN BY A [redacted] SOFTLY.
PUTTING UP HIS I.D. NOW--THIS YOUR GUY?
THAT'S HIM, TONY. THAT'S THE GUY.
I KNEW YOU WERE GONNA SAY THAT.
SAM SOFTLY DIED IN 1957, PEP.
LAB ACCIDENT THAT KILLED ABOUT NINE OTHER GUYS ON A MILITARY BASE.
THEY HAD A BODY. THERE WAS A FUNERAL.
PRESIDENT EISENHOWER WAS THERE.
TONY, WHAT WAS "S.H.D.O."?
WHAT DID SOFTLY DO?
ONCE UPON A TIME, IT WAS SOME OF THE MOST CLASSIFIED OF CLASSIFIED DATA, AND THEN IT GOT LOST.
AND NOT JUST LOST--SPY-LOST. WHICH IS--WELL, REALLY, REALLY LOST.
IT STOOD FOR "SUPER HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION."
THIS GUY MADE OLD ABE ERSKINE LOOK LIKE JONAS SALK.

"ERSKINE'S SUPER-SOLDIER PROGRAM--WHICH TO THIS DAY NOBODY QUITE UNDERSTANDS--SPAWNED A KIND OF FEEDING FRENZY INSIDE THE MILITARY SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY COMPLEX.
"EVERY EGGHEAD WITH THE RIGHT MORAL BLIND SPOTS AND A COUPLE HALF-BAKED SCHEMES FOR KILLING COMMUNISTS GOT A PIECE OF THE PIE.
"S.H.D.O. WAS ONE OF THEM. THE IDEA WAS TO CREATE SQUADS OF TEMPORARY SUPER-SOLDIERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD TRAIN.
"AND THEN PLACE THOSE SQUADS IN EACH OF THE FORTY-EIGHT STATES TO PROTECT FOLKS."
SHDO
STOP ME WHEN THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR.
IN CONCLUSION: IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE UP AGAINST A DEAD GUY WHO TRIED TO IMPLEMENT HIS OWN VERSION OF THE FIFTY-STATE INITIATIVE FIFTY YEARS AGO AS A TOP-TOP-TOP-SECRET MILITARY PROJECT.
I'M STILL WORKING ON WHAT AN INFERNAL MAN MIGHT BE.
ALL POINTS AT BRADBURY, ALL POINTS AT BRADBURY--
HENRY?
PEPPER. YEAH--WE NEED A MEDICAL CRASH STAFF TO THE ROOF A.S.A.P.--WE'RE INCOMING NOW.
DID YOU GET 'EM? MILO AND BECKY WITH YOU?
YEAH.
YEAH, YOU COULD SAY THAT.
10010.

C'MON, DAMMIT, THOSE [redacted] MY PEOPLE--
AND THEY'RE IN GOOD HANDS.
MEDICAL PERSONNEL ONLY BEYOND THIS POINT, ANTHEM--WE'LL UPDATE YOU [redacted] WE CAN.
DAMMIT.
THEY'LL [redacted] FINE. THEY'RE BOTH FIGHTERS.
THEY'LL GET 'EM FIXED UP AND FINE IN NO TIME.
GOOD NEWS, EVERYONE! THE LAWYERS SAY TRESPASSING ON A FORMER MILITARY BASE ISN'T TREASON!
WE'RE STILL WAITING TO [redacted] HOW MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS YOU'LL GET FOR DECAPITATING A MILITARY MAN.
OH, COME ON--WE ALL KNOW THIS GUY'S NOT REAL MILITARY.
IN FACT, THAT I BROUGHT YOU HIS STILL-LIVING-YET-SEVERED HEAD STRONGLY SUGGESTS THERE'S NOTHING [redacted] ABOUT HIM AT ALL.
WELL SOMEONE HAS TO BE FUNDING THEM!
SOMEONE HAS TO BE EQUIPPING...
FOLLOW THE MONEY.

SO DID YOU GUYS FIGURE OUT THAT IF THEY'RE NOT MILITARY--AND I'M TELLING YOU, THEY'RE NOT--THEN YOU NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHO'S EQUIPPING AND FINANCING THEM?
BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE I'M AT ALREADY. AND I CAN TELL YOU [redacted] MUCH: THEY'D HAVE TO BE REALLY RICH. LIKE ME-RICH, AT THE VERY LEAST.

WAY AHEAD OF YOU, TONY.
WHY NOT GET IT STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH?
GO TO HIOO IOU TRAIIIO OITORS.

ARE YOU KIDDING ME? WHAT IS THAT--AN L.M.D.?
ALMOST? WE'RE NOT 100% ON THAT ONE YET. [redacted] ASPECTS OF LIFE MODEL DECOYS TO HIS MAKEUP BUT THERE'S A LOT OF.. INNOVATIONS.

HOW IS IT STILL FUNCTIONING, CUT OFF FROM ITS [redacted] SOURCE?
I, AH--GENERAL SOFTLY? THIS IS TONY STARK, DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D. CAN YOU HEAR ME?

SAM SOFTLY. GENERAL, UNITED STATES ARMY. 013-41-8141.
SCREW YIO OOIUSCHEV.

MM.
THERE WAS A BASE JUST OFF THE SALTON SEA, HENRY.
THAT'S WHERE SOFTLY RAN S.H.D.O. FROM...

"...I SAY WE START [illegible]."
LET'S START AT THE START, GANG. ARE WE?
M.A.N. FROM S.H.A.D.O.W. UNIT [illegible] CAPTURED AND LARGELY DESTROYED--
HOW IS A THING "LARGELY DESTROYED?"
THEY TOOK THE HEAD. IT'S STILL [illegible] UP AND DRAWING OFF THE MOTHER BATTERY HERE.
SHUT IT DOWN-- [illegible] DON'T [illegible] TO GIVE [illegible] A HEAD START IN GETTING HERE.
MAUL? WHAT ABOUT YOU?
WE ARE LARGE AND [illegible] CHARGE AND READY TO RIOT, SIR.
[illegible] READY FOR YOU, BASICALLY.
GOOD. KEEP YOUR TEAMS SHARP. [illegible] DRILLS, DRY RUNS, WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO DO. I'M NOT SURE [illegible] IT'S COMING, BUT IT'S COMING SOON AND I'D APPRECIATE YOUR END [illegible] AS TURNKEY AS POSSIBLE.
YOU GOT IT, BOSS.
OKAY, THEN. GO, CLIT-- WHERE'S YOUR GIRL AT?
...
SHE'LL COME AROUND. [illegible] WORKING WITH HER, SHE'LL COME AROUND.
MR. STANE.
YOU KNOW, WHEN MY DAD OBADIAH FAILED, HE PUT A REPULSOR RAY TO HIS HEAD AND FIRED. THAT'S NOT REALLY MY STYLE.
IF I FAIL, IT'S BECAUSE [illegible] FAILED.
AND IF [illegible] FAIL, I'M GOING TO WIPE YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY LINE FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH.
SO DON'T FAIL.
GOOD MEETING, EVERYBODY.

HOW DO YOU...
WHEN YOU HAD TO WRITE LETTERS HOME TO THEIR FAMILIES, HOW DID YOU DO THAT?
YOU MEAN WHEN A KID'D...WHEN A KID WOULD DIE?
NO, WE DID IT.
YEAH. YOU HAD TO [redacted] LETTERS, RIGHT? THAT'S NOT JUST A THING FROM THE MOVIES.
YOU JUST KEEP IT BROAD. TALK TO HIS BUDDIES, GET STORIES.
YOU TALK UP THEIR QUALITIES. THE QUALITIES THE KID HAD YOU MOST RESPECTED, YOU MOST RELIED ON--
BUT ON YOUR SHIPS--
YOU HAD HUNDREDS OF KIDS. HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT EACH AND EVERY--
I DIDN'T ALWAYS WRITE 'EM. I HAD--
I HAD STAFF. I--I'D STAFF IT OUT, SOMETIMES.
GOD HELP ME, I'D STAFF IT OUT.
OF COURSE. YEAH, NO, OF COURSE.
HOW DO YOU--
HOW DO YOU WRITE A LETTER FOR MILO'S FAMILY? AFTER EVERYTHING HE'S [redacted] THROUGH--
OR BECKY, HOW DO YOU--
"MAYBE THEY DIED FIGHTING A MAYBE MILITARY MADMAN?"
ANTHEM? HEAVY?
THEY'RE [redacted]

BECKY! MILO!
HEY, Y'ALL!
WHAT DID--HOW DID YOU--
HE SAID YOU WERE *INERT.* HE SAID THE TWO OF YOU WERE--
I WAS WRONG. THEY WERE QUITE... NERT.
WHAT THE HELL ■ ■ TALKING ABOUT?
WE MAY HAVE CHOSEN TO BE IN THAT FORM THERE FOR A WHILE, BOSS.
WHAT? WHY?
THEY WERE HAVING *SEX.*
DO WHAT NOW?
THEY WERE HAVING--
WE ■■■ *YOU,* WE JUST DON'T QUITE--
THEY HAD INTERMINGLED THEIR NERVOUS SYSTEMS AND--MR. HELLRUNG, KEEP IN MIND THIS IS BLEEDING-EDGE HYPOTHETICAL MEDICAL SCIENCE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT--
--THE ELECTROCUTION KNOCKED OUT MS. RYAN'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN ANY BUT THE MOST RUDIMENTARY OF BODYFORMS--
--MR. FIELDS' INPUT PORTS --WHICH ALLOW HIM TO TELEPILOT THE SUPERNAUT SUIT--
--MIXED TOGETHER LIKE THAT AND THEY--
DOC. TELL HIM THE *GOOD PART.*
TA-DAAAAA.

YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, HOLLY. YOU KNOW?
CUT THROUGH ALL THE TOUGH-KID CRAP AND YOU WERE ALWAYS A LOST LITTLE GIRL LOOKING FOR FAIRY TALES AND MAGIC.
EVEN AFTER YOU-- EVEN AFTER YOU HURT ME--
I KNEW IT WAS BECAUSE YOU JUST WANTED MORE MAGIC THAN I COULD GIVE YOU.
YOU'RE A LITTLE BRAT THAT JUST WANTS TO BE LOVED.
AND AS MUCH AS I HATED YOU, I ALWAYS FELT LIKE I UNDERSTOOD YOU.
WENDY...
I DIDN'T CHEAT ON YOU BECAUSE I [redacted] TO LOVE. I CHEATED [redacted] YOU BECAUSE YOU [redacted] BED.
ZAP HER.
AAAIIEEEEEE
ZZZZRRKK

YEAH, BABE, THIS IS GONNA GO A LOT EASIER IF YOU GET ON THE TEAM, YOU KNOW?
JUST US GIRLS. JUST LIKE OLD TIMES.
ONLY BETTER. ONLY NOW, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH SUPER-POWERS.
THE PROCESS [redacted] ALL THE DAHLIAS SUPER-POWERS.
THAT'S THE GOAL HERE--THAT'S WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH. AND WE NEED YOU HEALTHY, HAPPY, AND RE-POWERED BY OUR PROCESS.
SUPER-POWERS FOR EVERYONE, POST-HUMANITY [redacted]
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY THE ORDER AND THE WHOLE FIFTY STATE INITIATIVE WERE SUCH AN AFFRONT TO THAT?
ARROGANT. ELITIST. FASCIST.
WHY SHOULD THE ONLY PEOPLE WITH SUPER-POWERS [redacted] JACKED-UP COP PIGS LOOKING TO BOSS THE REST OF US AROUND?
WE'RE THE FIRST OF THE NEXT [redacted] OF MANKIND--WOMANKIND.
WE'RE THE FIRST--
--GGKKKKKK--
WHOA.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING?

DRANG! MARIE!
DON'T LEAVE ME--DON'T YOU--
A LOT OF PAIN HAPPENED IN THIS ROOM, WENDY.
A LOT OF TERROR. A LOT OF HORROR.
THEY DID [redacted] TO PEOPLE HERE.
AWFUL THINGS.
I CAN FEEL THEM, WENDY.
I CAN FEEL THEM ALL.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GUYS DID IT, BUT SOMEHOW TURNING OFF MY STARK POWERS...

...REACTIVATED MY MUTANT POWERS.
I'M BACK, BITCH.
WHAT WOULD I DO IF MY POWERS CAME BACK, WHAT WOULD I DO IF MY POWERS CAME BACK...
HM.
I SUPPOSE I'D EXACT MY SLOW AND UNHOLY REVENGE ON EVERY-ONE THAT EVER DID ME WRONG, ONE WRETCHED SOUL AT A TIME, UNTIL THE SOUNDS OF THEIR SCREAMS SLAKED MY UNNATURAL THIRST FOR THEIR SORROWS.
HA HA. JUST KIDDING.
BUT NOT REALLY. I'D TOTALLY GO EVEN SOME SCORES.
THAT'S COOL, RIGHT?
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

AWARD-WINNING WRITER, & INTERVIEW PRO, ED BRUBAKER

MARVEL: *Ballpark, how many interviews have you done regarding Cap since Captain America #25?*

ED BRUBAKER: I would guess a few hundred, probably. The vast majority of them coming in that first week or two from the time the book hit. It was pretty intense, really, to be in the eye of the storm like that.

MARVEL: *Since starting your run on the book, you've really put a focus on Captain America, garnering industry and mainstream attention for some incredibly controversial moves. Was that intended from the onset?*

EB: All I ever intended was to just write a Captain America book that would be the kind of superhero/espionage comic that I'd personally like to read. I just wanted people to take the book seriously on its own terms and do some epic comic book action and drama. I was a bit nervous about how the reaction would be when the Winter Soldier was revealed to be Bucky, but I knew I had a good story, and hoped that would win over any controversy.

MARVEL: *You've done the impossible so far in your Captain America run at every turn. Are there any ideas that you've pitched for Cap that have been shot down?*

EB: Uhh... This is kind of scary, but no. Tom Brevoort's said yes to everything I've wanted to do.

MARVEL: *Moving to Daredevil, you have your second year wrapping up. After putting Matt in jail, busting him out, and driving his wife crazy, what can you possibly do to top yourself?*

EB: Wait, I have to top all that? I thought I'd just let Foggy take up the mantle for a while and see how he does while Matt cries in his coffee.

Or... maybe I'll bring in a few more villains and have a lot of murder and mayhem instead. I haven't decided yet.

MARVEL: *Daredevil has existed in his own corner of the Marvel Universe (Hell's Kitchen) for a while now. If you could integrate him into any part of the rest of the Universe, where do you think he'd best fit?*

EB: I think it might be time for Matt to branch out a bit and not just care about one "hood" as it were, actually. I think maybe he needs to move around in the city more, and maybe even go to Jersey now and then. Aren't all the mobsters in Jersey now? The one coolest thing about Daredevil is that he fits in any urban environment, the grittier the better, generally. I enjoy that aspect of the book a lot, and I like that in many ways *Daredevil* is its own little world.

MARVEL: *Along with Matt Fraction, you also brought a "cool" factor to a character many thought was a joke for a while – Iron Fist. What is it about your take that seems to have really finally clicked with audiences?*

EB: I think it must be all the crazy over-the-top pulp era kung fu. It's mostly on Matt Fraction and David Aja, really. I started out as a co-writer and plot-master on *Iron Fist*, and have slowly moved back more and more and let those guys just go nuts. I do work on every issue, still, and sometimes there's a line of dialogue that people think is from Matt that is actually from me, but Matt and David really deserve most of the credit. I co-plotted and sort of script-doctored or edited the second arc here and there, at most. All the new Immortal Weapons were invented by Matt, I just said there should be six other cities with their own heroes and we should have a big tournament.

MARVEL: *After 2 years on Uncanny X-Men, you now have the door wide open to take the team in your direction. Anything you can tease us on?*

EB: Let's just say, I don't think we'll be seeing them in class anytime soon, or rebuilding Xavier's Institute.I've probably said too much, haven't I?

MARVEL: *Finally, you have an Eisner-winning book, Criminal, under the Icon line. For those who know your work from the Marvel U but are not familiar with Criminal, can you give us a few words on the premise?*

EB: Criminal is me and Sean Phillips (the award-winning artist of Marvel Zombies) just tapping into our love of noir and crime fiction and bringing it to comics in our own way. We've created a huge cast of characters, most of them thieves and murderers, but sometimes just people forced into bad situations out of desperation and a need to survive. It's a bit like *Sin City*, in that you can read any of the stories and not know anything about the previous ones, but in *Criminal*, when people fall off rooftops and land on cars, they die a horrible death. I'd really urge readers who are fans of my or Sean's work to check it out, since we both think it's the best stuff we've ever done, and we won a bunch of awards for it last summer, including Best New Series.

'Nuff Said!

team

DCP

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